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## About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playlist files online!

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"×12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit [www.warehouse23.com](http://www.warehouse23.com).

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: [rec.games.frp.gurps](mailto:rec.games.frp.gurps).

*GURPSnet.* This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to [www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/](http://www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/).

The *GURPS Uplift* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/uplift/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/uplift/).

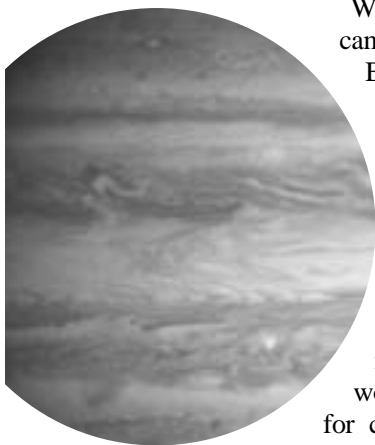
## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*; those that begin with S are for *GURPS Space, Third Edition*. The abbreviation for *this* book is U. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

# INTRODUCTION

*Welcome to the future. It's a tough neighborhood!*

Five hundred years from now, the Earthclan is under siege. The galaxy is populated by thousands of ancient races with superior technology, races who view Humanity – along with our neo-chimp and neo-dolphin companions – as lowly “wolflings” without place or pedigree. Only the wits, unpredictability, and daring spirit of the terrans and their few allies have kept the clan free.



With *GURPS Uplift* you can set a campaign in the universe of David Brin's award-winning “Uplift” novels. Players will take on Earth's boldest adventurers, wiliest diplomats, and most cunning warriors, trying to carve a niche for Earthclan, resisting the schemes of the genocidal Tandu and the arrogant Soro. Beyond character, race, and world descriptions, this worldbook includes a set of rules for creating and “uplifting” realistic alien species.

For this long-awaited new edition, whole new sections have been added, including updates and player-generated corrections/suggestions, plus extensive material carefully drawn from David Brin's latest “Uplift” novels! It has also been designed to work well with *Contacting Aliens: An Illustrated Guide to David Brin's Uplift Universe* (see p. 174).

## What You'll Need

The *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Compendium I* are required to play this worldbook. Unless you are satisfied with planetbound adventures, you'll want a copy of *GURPS Space* as well.

We strongly suggest the GM read the initial “Uplift” novels to pick up some of the flavor of the future history. The “Uplift Storm Trilogy,” although primarily set on the colony world Jijo, is a must-read if you intend to set your campaign after the Great Sundering.

## About the Author

Stefan Jones, a long-time gamer and SF fan, has worked as a software developer, SF convention organizer, teacher, technical support specialist, traveling sales trainer, and trade show roustabout. He has written material for a number of games, including *Villains and Vigilantes*, *Traveller*, *Space Opera*, *Tunnels & Trolls*, and *Car Wars*. Non-gaming writing credits include articles on model rocketry, reviews of music CDs, and environmentalist rants, for publications as diverse as *WIRED* and *Whole Earth Magazine*.

Stefan currently makes his living as a QA engineer for a Oregon firm which produces digital video hardware and software. Except for the time a confused derelict tried to set him on fire, he has led a relatively placid existence.

## FOREWORD BY DAVID BRIN

I am most pleased to recommend *GURPS Uplift*, a role-playing expansion on themes first created in my novels *Sundering*, *Startide Rising*, and *The Uplift War*. As one who's gone on an adventure or two in his day, I can't say how delighted I am with the job Stefan Jones has done here.

First, this is a well-organized, well-conceived game universe for use with Steve Jackson's *GURPS* roleplaying system. It's filled with opportunities for fun and excitement, and contains some brash new innovations unseen in other games.

## Suggested Reading

We highly recommend reading the books on which this is all based, David Brin's “Uplift” and “Uplift Storm” series. The first trilogy consists of *Sundering*, *Startide Rising*, and *The Uplift War*. The “Uplift Storm” series includes *Brightness Reef*, *Infinity's Shore*, and *Heaven's Reach*.

Completists may wish to look up the Uplift short stories “Life in the Extreme,” published in the August 1998 edition of *Popular Science*, and “Temptation,” published in the anthology *Far Horizons* (Robert Silverberg, editor). Both are also now available for download at [www.davidbrin.com](http://www.davidbrin.com).

*Contacting Aliens: An Illustrated Guide to David Brin's Uplift Universe*, by Kevin Lenagh and David Brin, is a comprehensive guide to the aliens of the “Uplift” setting,

presented as a handbook for Terragens Agents. Published by Bantam Books. See p. 174.

See also:

*Earth*, also by David Brin – not set in the “Uplift” history, but a good exposition of the earth-conscious attitudes that a Terragens character would hold.

*Sirius* by Olaf Stapledon – a low-tech uplift story.

*Norstrilia* by Cordwainer Smith – another sort of “uplift universe.”

*Star Maker* by Olaf Stapledon – a future history with the same multi-galactic scope as the “Uplift” universe.

*In the Shadow of Man* by Jane Goodall – a look at a potential species for uplift in our future.

## Web Resources

We've created a web page to keep you up-to-date on Uplift universe issues: [www.sjgames.com/uplift/](http://www.sjgames.com/uplift/). Check there for the latest errata, variant material, and "outtakes." We'll also maintain a current list of notable fan sites, such as the amazing Alliance for Progress encyclopedia.

David Brin's own official website may be found at [www.davidbrin.com](http://www.davidbrin.com).

Foremost among these is a method for designing or rolling up a whole new alien species, deriving not only their physical attributes but their basic personalities, as well. This part of the game book was created in part at the request of CONTACT, a conference on Human-extraterrestrial interaction, held yearly by scientists, anthropologists and science fiction writers. It attempts to bring a bit of realism into the making of ETs. We hope you enjoy it, and look forward to receiving your feedback!

But there is another aspect to *GURPS Uplift* I want to mention. As a longtime gamer myself, I began to find it tiresome just going out and smashing and bashing for fun and profit. Oh, sure, you can do a lot of that in this universe. But *GURPS Uplift* also takes players to a different kind of cosmos than they may be familiar with. It's not the usual "Hey, I'm a Human, so eat leaden death, BEM scum!" sort of place we've all seen all too often.

When we do get out there among the stars, we're likely to find things are pretty complicated. And many of the problems we face on Earth will drag along with us – and hold us back – if we don't grow up a little first.

In *GURPS Uplift*, players and characters soon learn:

That what you do may affect more than just yourselves. It may help or endanger the whole of Humanity!

That the universe doesn't owe us any special favors, just because we're Human. We ain't necessarily gonna be the big boys. In fact, someday we may find ourselves in the precarious position held by Native Americans a few hundred years ago, facing much tougher and endlessly numerous. Others we can barely understand. In a situation like that, you learn to adapt – to be light on your feet – or else!

That the ultimate job of any species is to avoid making really bad mistakes!

That planets are much more delicate places than a lot of games might have you think. Grave damage is all too easy to accomplish, all too hard to correct.

That you really know who your friends are when you're the little guy, and the universe is a lot harder to survive in than a schoolyard!

I guess you could say *GURPS Uplift* is where you graduate to when kindergarten is over . . . when it's time to roll up your sleeves and play in the big leagues.

Can you make it here? There's only one way to find out. Just watch your step!

Good luck.

– David Brin

## Acknowledgements for Fictional Vignettes

### Chapter 5

The excerpt on pp. 88-89 is from *The Uplift War*, © 1987 by David Brin, published by Bantam Books

### Chapter 6

The excerpt on pp. 104-105 is from *The Uplift War*, © 1987 by David Brin, published by Bantam Books

### Appendix A

The fictional excerpts on pp. 159-161 are © 2002 by David Brin.

### Elsewhere

Fictional excerpts in all other chapters are by Stefan Jones.



## CONTACT: Cultures of the Imagination

CONTACT is a long-running multidisciplinary conference attended by astronomers, biologists, anthropologists, science fiction fans and authors, teachers, and students. It is held annually, traditionally in California's Bay Area. In addition to informative presentations and panel discussions, each conference features a session of COTI (Cultures of the Imagination). This sophisticated world-building and creature-creation exercise climaxes in a roleplaying simulation of contact between two alien cultures.

The alien creation system in the first edition of *GURPS Uplift* has been used as a resource by many COTI teams.

For more information:

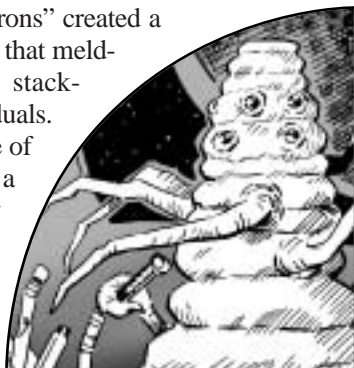
Web page: [www.cabrillo.cc.ca.us/contact/](http://www.cabrillo.cc.ca.us/contact/)

Mail address: CONTACT, Department of Anthropology, Cabrillo College, 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA 05003

# JOPHUR AND TRAEKI

*A-Jophur, absu-Poa, ul-Sarrphor, ul-Phasheni, ul-Dor-rvi, ul-Voam-voam*

The Poa were pacifistic but intellectually fervent members of the Obeyer alliance (see p. 12). The Poa's first try at uplifting the ring-colony creatures of Jophekka resulted in the Traeki: gentle, non-judgmental, and rather dithering creatures who did not seem destined to succeed their patrons as keepers of the Obeyer catechism. Despairing, the Poa turned over the clients to their final-stage Uplift Consorts, the terrible Oailie. These "step patrons" created a new type of component ring that melded the consensus-minded stack-colonies into driven individuals. By the time the Jophur came of age, the Poa lived on only a few Preserve worlds. They are thought to have since joined the Retired Order or even become extinct.



## Biology

The Jophur are colonial life forms. They are composed of "sap rings," self-contained organisms with toroid-shaped bodies. The ring's interior is fluid-filled spongy material. The translucent skin is thin but tough; punctures are rare but serious injuries. Rings live off a combination of photosynthesis and saprophytosis (scavenging); they move by creeping, using their internal juices to stretch and retract parts of the ring. Short tentacles, rich with nerve endings, stud the bottom surface of the ring. The ring-creatures communicate through pheromone cues and direct neural contact.

Individually, the rings have a simple animal intelligence, but under the right circumstances they join together in a colony-stack to create a sapient individuals. Once joined, the rings' tentacles grow and specialize into sticky-soled feet, sensory organs or brain-nodes. For most purposes, the stacked rings become one fully-knit creature.

The Jophur's patrons (and later the Jophur themselves) created more types of rings, including brain-nodes specialized for rapid computation, oration peaks to give high priests entrancing voices, and rings with heavy-duty tentacles for rapid movement. The Oailie's contribution, the *master ring*, turns a Traeki into a Jophur. Hundreds of castes can be built by combining these rings.

Jophur eat by settling into a pile of rotting meat and vegetable matter and resting. They usually do this for five or six hours per day. They are aware but passive when eating; it is the Jophur equivalent of sleeping. Jophur prefer to work under bright, ultraviolet-rich light; without this they feel uncomfortable and fatigued.

The creatures reproduce by budding off ring-creatures. Growing ring-buds look like little craters on the host's skin. Jophur are sexless; genes are exchanged by immature rings. Rings which have "mated" refuse to join with each other.

Individual Jophur vary in appearance greatly. When a Jophur is agitated the dark sap shows through, turning the individual a purple-brown color.

## Typical Jophur

Fourteen-ring Jophur stand about 6'6" high and weigh 280 lbs. Each additional ring adds 6" to height and 10 lbs. Oration peaks add another 1' of height.

### Traeki Pharmacist **171 points**

A Traeki pharmacist can be found in nearly every village on Jijo.

**Rings:** BS [×3], PS, MT [×4], SV, SA, CS, UR [×2].

**Attributes:** ST -2 [-15].

**Advantages:** 360-Degree Vision [25]; Double-Jointed [5]; Drug Factory [20]; Extra Arms (24 total, no physical attack) [110]; Extra Legs (6 total, cannot kick) [5]; Full Coordination 1 [50]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Ultrasonic Hearing [25].

**Disadvantages:** Attentive [-1]; Enemy (All Jophur, 6 or less) [-20]; Jophur Body [-25]; Primitive (TL6) [-20]; Reduced Move (Running) -1 [-5]; Selfless [-10]; Undiscriminating [-1].

**Skills:** 8 points toward Diagnosis/TL5 (MH) and First Aid/TL5 for several races; 10 points of M/A drug and medication production skills (e.g., anesthetic, burn ointment, disinfectant.).

**Languages:** Anglic at IQ-1 [3]; Galactic Six at IQ-1 [1]; Galactic Eight (native) at IQ [0].

## Jophur Psychology

The Jophur see themselves as holy warriors, setting an example for other Obeyers and protecting the integrity of alliance dogma. Vague notions of an afterlife, and possibly reincarnation, are implicit in Jophur beliefs; they worship their ancestors who are believed to pass on "spiritual" rings to just-assembled Jophur. Their high priests follow Obeyer dictates to the letter . . . often to the displeasure of the Jophur's harassed diplomatic and strategic corps! They despise the Terragens and would like to see them wiped out.

A Jophur's master ring rules them all, and with its ego binds them. This gives them tremendous will and sense of purpose. However, this is not quite the same as free-willed individuality; Jophur stacks are created and trained with a specific task in mind. They pursue this goal with single-minded fervor, and the consequences and feelings of others be damned! It takes the talents of the even more egotistical and charismatic leaders and priests to sway a stack ruled by a master ring.

**“Y**ou gave this Hoon your protein supplement?” Bertie Sohng stared at his feet. “Yes, Doctor. I’m sick of peanut butter, and he did ask, and so . . .”

The Traeki produced a sound that reminded Bertie of the time his entire kindergarten made simultaneous underarm noises. “You are old enough to know that Human foods can hurt a person of another sept. Or make them a little crazy, like this poor boy.”

